

**Testimony of the Connecticut Children's Medical Center  
to the Insurance and Real Estate Committee Regarding *Senate Bill 14 An Act  
Concerning A Task Force To Study Health Care For Uninsured Children*  
February 3, 2011**

Senator Crisco, Representative Megna, members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts. My name is Martin Gavin, and I am President and CEO of the Connecticut Children's Medical Center. This submitted testimony concerns *Senate Bill 14 An Act Concerning A Task Force To Study Health Care For Uninsured Children*.

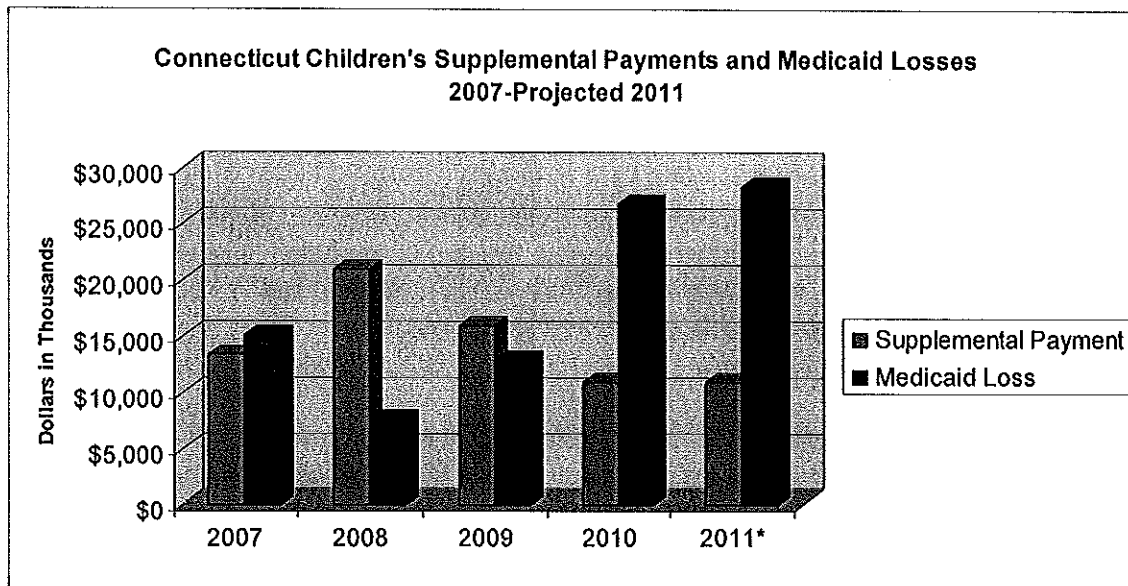
The proposal to establish a task force to study the health care needs of uninsured children is a good one. The health care needs of all of Connecticut's children should be met and I would like to offer the expertise of Connecticut Children's as a participant in this process. All children should have the health care they need to grow and learn. The children of Connecticut deserve a health care system that both provides them with coverage and enables them to access high quality health care services. It is critically important for the State to provide coverage for uninsured children, but the coverage will not help them if providers cannot afford to treat them. The State must pay safety net providers like Connecticut Children's adequately in order to ensure access to care.

Connecticut Children's offers the full spectrum of pediatric care to children from each of Connecticut's 169 cities and towns. In Fiscal Year 2010, Connecticut Children's:

- Experienced 288,000 patient visits including 33,000 pediatric primary care visits,
- Cared for over 53,000 children in our emergency department—140 children every day, 24 hours a day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year, and
- Conducted over 9,900 surgeries ranging from neurosurgery to ear tubes.

Connecticut Children's is a vital resource for children and families across the state. Every day, our medical professionals provide hope to children and families and then use their talents and expertise to turn that hope into reality. We are the region's only academic medical center dedicated exclusively to the care of children and we are the Pediatric Department for the University of Connecticut School of Medicine. We have trained over 170 new pediatricians in the past 12 years and 72 of these are currently practicing in Connecticut. We develop pioneering treatment programs for asthma, diabetes, cancer, pain management and other major concerns of childhood. In addition to our main campus in Hartford, Connecticut Children's offers services in 17 other cities and towns across the state including our ten partner hospitals.

Connecticut's HUSKY program has been very successful in providing coverage to vulnerable children with about 30% of all children enrolled in the program. Unfortunately, HUSKY reimbursement rates remain inadequate. This combination of high enrollment for children and low reimbursement puts an undue burden on Connecticut's pediatric providers.



Connecticut Children's current and growing Medicaid shortfall threatens our long-term financial solvency. The losses noted in the chart above and the potential for continued losses in the future jeopardize our ability to meet the needs of all of Connecticut's children, HUSKY or not. This ongoing loss trend reduces our ability to make needed capital investments and impairs our ability to recruit and retain exemplary staff.

As the region's only academic medical center dedicated exclusively to the care of children, Connecticut Children's enhances the quality of life in our state, we support the local economy, and we are good for kids. The State of Connecticut insures our neediest children by providing them with HUSKY cards. Those children come to Connecticut Children's to get high quality family centered pediatric health care services. The State must pay Connecticut Children's the cost of providing that care. Connecticut Children's is projected to lose more than \$28 million this year taking care of children who rely on HUSKY. I would welcome the opportunity to contribute to an effort to study how we can together make sure that children have access to the health care they deserve.